

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W

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O R 031006Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0000

SECDEF IMMEDIATE

JCS IMMEDIATE

INFO CINCPAC IMMEDIATE

CINCUNC IMMEDIATE

CNFK IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

S E C R E T SEOUL 8106

EXDIS

JOINT EMBASSY/UNC MESSAGE

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: PBOR, MARR, KS, KN

SUBJ: ROK PROPOSAL FOR EARLY MAC MEETING: KOREAN NORTHWESTERN
COASTAL SITUATION

REFS:

A. CINCUNC 020925Z DEC 73

B. AMEMB SEOUL 021010Z DEC 73 (SEOUL 8069)

C. AMEMB SEOUL 020330Z DEC 73 (SEOUL 8063)

D. CINCUNC 021532Z DEC 73

1. YESTERDAY DEC 2 MND YU CALLED MEETING WITH SENIOR
UNC OFFICERS WHICH IS SUMMARIZED IN REF A. AT THIS
MEETING, MND SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED EARLY MAC MEETING
TO STATE ROK/UNC POSITION AND TO GIVE STRONG WARNING
TO NORTH KOREANS. AT THE SAME TIME, CHARGE WAS CALLED
IN BY VICE FOREIGN MINISTER. THIS CONVERSATION IS
REPORTED IN REF B. AFTER THE MND/UNC MEETING, AND
AS REQUESTED BY UNC AT THAT MEETING, A DRAFT STATEMENT
OF THE ROKG POSITION, WORDED BY THE MND, WAS PROVIDED.

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THIS PAPER WAS ENTITLED "PRESIDENTIAL INSTRUCTIONS"
KEY PORTIONS ARE: QUOTE THE POSITION OF THE REPUBLIC
OF KOREAN GOVERNMENT IS AS FOLLOWS: (A) THE FIVE
ISLANDS MUST BE MAINTAINED. (B) ANY INTERRUPTION WITH

THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA FERRIES AND/OR NAVAL ESCORT SHIPS TRAVELLING TO AND FROM THESE FIVE ISLANDS WOULD CONSTITUTE VIOLATION OF THE ARMISTICE AGREEMENT AND WILL BE REPELLED INSTANTLY. (C) THE ABOVE-MENTIONED POSITIONS SHOULD BE CLEARLY CONVEYED TO NORTH KOREA THROUGH MAC AND NORTH KOREA SHOULD BE MADE TO RETRACT ITS 1 DECEMBER 1973 STATEMENT AT THE 346TH MAC MEETING. (D) ONE OR TWO INSTANCES OF INTERRUPTIONS BY NORTH KOREA MAY BE TOLERATED BUT FURTHER INTERRUPTIONS WILL BE MET BY MEASURES DESCRIBED IN PARAGRAPH B. (CLOSE CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION WILL BE MAINTAINED WITH UNC.) UNQUOTE

2. THE KEY QUESTIONS RAISED IN THE FOREGOING ARE:

(A) WHETHER WE NEED TO GIVE FURTHER SIGNAL OF OUR INTENTIONS AND

(B) WHETHER EARLY MAC MEETING IS BEST MECHANISM TO DO THIS. ROKG DESIRES EARLY RESPONSE BECAUSE THE NEXT NORMAL SUPPORT TRIP TO PAENGYONG-DO AS DESCRIBED IN REF C. WILL DEPART WEDNESDAY, DEC 5 OR THURSDAY DEC 6. THIS WILL BE THE NEXT SIGNAL AND FIRST REAL OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE NK REACTION. FERRY TRIP TO YONGPYONG-DO NOW SCHEDULED ON TUESDAY, DEC 4, DUE TO WEATHER DELAY, IS NOT EXPECTED TO PROVOKE NK REACTION.

3. WE SEE THREE ALTERNATIVES IN HANDLING ROK REQUEST:

A. PROCEED WITH EARLY MAC MEETING AS ROKG HAS REQUESTED, HOWEVER, TEMPERING THEIR DESIRED POSITION. IF THIS COURSE IS FOLLOWED IT WOULD BE NECESSARY MAKE REQUEST ON DEC 4 FOR MEETING ON DEC 6.

B. USE MAC CHANNEL FOR LESS PUBLIC STATEMENT OF OUR POSITION RE ACCESS; FOR INSTANCE LETTER FROM UNC SENIOR MEMBER TO KPA SENIOR MEMBER STATING OUR POSITION. WOULD EXPECT NK RECEIPT OF THIS LETTER WOULD BE SHORTLY
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FOLLOWED BY THEIR OWN REQUEST FOR AN EARLY MEETING.

C. DEFER ROKG REQUEST FOR EARLY MAC MEETING BUT CONSIDER SOME OTHER MEANS OF ASSURING THAT NORTH KOREANS HAVE RECEIVED SUFFICIENTLY CLEAR SIGNAL AS TO OUR INTENTION MAINTAIN ACCESS TO THE UNC-CONTROLLED ISLANDS.

4. IN ANY OF THESE ALTERNATIVES OUR APPROACH WOULD BE LIMITED CLEARLY TO ARMISTICE AFFAIRS ASPECTS, NOT ALL INCURSIONS OR TERRITORIAL WATERS QUESTIONS.

5. AT THIS POINT WE WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO PROCEED TO EARLY MAC MEETING AS REQUESTED BY ROKG. THE UNC SENIOR

MEMBER AT 346TH MEETING HAS ALREADY REJECTED NK DEMAND. SOUTH KOREANS THROUGH MND PRESS CONFERENCE HAVE MADE THEIR POSITION PUBLIC. AS REFS C. AND D. INDICATE, WE ARE ALSO MAINTAINING OUR NORMAL PATTERN OF SUPPORT TO THE ISLANDS IN QUESTION. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, MAC MEETING COULD HEIGHTEN TENSION AND FORCE NK AND UNC INTO A MORE EXTREME POSITION OF PUBLIC CONFRONTATION. ALSO, AT THIS POINT, WE PREFER NOT TO USE LETTER BECAUSE CONSEQUENCES WOULD PROBABLY BE SIMILAR. BY RETURNING TO MAC AT THEIR REQUEST WE WOULD ALSO LESSEN CHANCES THAT ROKG WOULD USE COORDINATING COMMITTEE CHANNEL FOR BILATERAL POLITICAL EFFORT TO DEFUSE SITUATION. IN OUR VIEW, BEST WAY TO ESTABLISH OUR DETERMINATION IS QUIETLY TO PROCEED WITH OUR NORMAL PATTERN OF SUPPORT OF ISLANDS AND AVOID, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, VERBAL CLASHES WHICH MIGHT ADD FUEL TO FIRE.

6. AT SAME TIME WE FEEL WE SHOULD CONVEY TO DPRK THROUGH ALL POSSIBLE CHANNELS OUR INTENTION TO EXERCISE RIGHT OF ACCESS. CONSEQUENTLY, BELIEVE WASHINGTON AGENCIES SHOULD GIVE CONSIDERATION APPROACH TO PRC ON THIS MATTER. BELIEVE IT IS ONLY PRUDENT THAT WE USE SOME SUCH DIPLOMATIC CHANNEL TO ASSURE NK UNDERSTANDS OUR INTENTION. SINCE CHINESE PEOPLES VOLUNTEERS ARE SIGNATORY TO ARMISTICE AGREEMENT, LIKE KPA AND UNC, APPROACH TO CHINESE WOULD BE ENTIRELY APPROPRIATE. THIS WOULD ALSO ALLOW US TO TAKE POSITION WITH ROKG THAT, WHILE WE DO NOT WISH TO PROCEED WITH
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MAC MEETING NOW, WE ARE PREPARED TO TAKE MATTER UP IN APPROPRIATE DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS. IN DOING THIS WE WOULD ALSO INSIST THAT THEY MAKE USE OF SOUTH/NORTH MECHANISM IN EFFORT TO DEFUSE SITUATION.

7. IN SUM WE RECOMMEND THAT WE BE AUTHORIZED TO TELL ROKG:

(A) WE WISH TO DEFER MAC MEETING FOR PRESENT.

(B) THAT UNC IN COOPERATION WITH ROKG MILITARY OFFICIALS WILL CONTINUE TO TAKE ALL APPROPRIATE MILITARY PRECAUTIONS.

(C) WE WILL TAKE MATTER UP IN APPROPRIATE DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS TO ASSURE OTHER SIDE THAT WE INTEND TO MAINTAIN OUR RIGHT OF ACCESS TO ISLANDS. (WE WOULD SPELL OUT VERY CLEARLY TO ROKG THAT OUR APPROACH WOULD BE LIMITED TO ARMISTICE AGREEMENT CONSIDERATION.)

(D) WE URGE THAT ROKG TO MAKE MOST SERIOUS EFFORT THROUGH ITS DIRECT CHANNEL TO DISCUSS BILATERAL ASPECTS OF THIS MATTER WITH THE NORTH KOREANS.

8. IN VIEW NEED FOR EARLY DECISION RE PROCEEDING WITH
MAC MEETING, REQUEST INITIAL WASHINGTON VIEWS BY OPENING
OF BUSINESS DEC 4 LOCAL TIME HERE. IN INTERIM WE WILL TELL
ROKG THAT WE HAVE REFERRED MATTER BACK TO WASHINGTON ON
URGENT BASIS AND ARE AWAITING REPLY.
UNDERHILL

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